



The Socialists whom the German "Fascist" are determined to keep in order demonstrating at Cologne.

A Bavarian Prediction of the Blood Bath

THE LEADER OF THE SO-CALLED GERMAN FASCISTI INTERVIEWED

The Germans have other troubles besides the French. In Bavaria, at least, they have their so-called Fascisti, ultimately inspired by Ludendorff, and led by Herr Hitler, who believes in a "strong" and united Germany, as he explained at Munich to Mr. Percy Brown.

THE leaders of the new movement in Bavaria, which is being mistaken for the equivalent of the Fascisti movement in Italy, are difficult people to reach. The first person I tried to interview was General Ludendorff, whom I had previously visited shortly after the signing of the Armistice, thus giving him his first opportunity of expressing himself to a post-war world. I spoke to him on the telephone and explained my business. He asked the name of my newspaper, and when I told him he banged down the receiver. Apparently the General objected to the comments I had made after that previous interview, for I had said that I had hopes that there would come into the German public life leaders who would really lead and not try to drive. The General lacks understanding of the people and of the needs of reconstruction, and becomes a pawn in the hands of unsophisticated people. I next tried to reach Herr Hitler, who is regarded as the Mussolini of Germany. I was successful only after a long search. There was some little difficulty in penetrating into the headquarters of the National Social Democrats, surely the queerest Socialists of all the different kinds I have met. Here Hitler has his office. The address is Number 12, Cornilousstrasse, in the poorer part of the city, and it took the best part of a day to get past the doors.

FOR five hundred marks I acquired a badge from one of the recruits, for which he paid one hundred and fifty marks. I chatted with others on the fringe of the crowd outside the headquarters, the front of which is a bookshop, and learned that a "Genosse" (comrade) might be admitted at the rear of the premises if he had urgent business to discuss with the party leaders. After some hours of persistent tapping and waiting I at last found myself inside. I was told Hitler would not be in till the afternoon. "Ring him up and make an appointment for me," I said, knowing that in such circumstances the abrupt way is the only way. A short conference and another glance at my badge, and my questioner went to the telephone. After he had got the number on the automatic telephone, which, by the way, is the best institution in Bavaria, I was told that I might see Herr Hitler if I returned at four o'clock.

PROMPTLY at the time mentioned I was on the step of the bookshop and was admitted through an inner door by a keen-eyed custodian. The offices, although none too tidy, were well-arranged on the same plan as the French post-offices, with small *guichets*. When a name was called one of the recruits would walk to a small window and receive some papers and an armlet and then vanish through the doorway as if he had to get somewhere in a hurry. Over one of the windows was the word "Sturmabteilung," which means storming division, or shock troops. I noticed that those who were called to this window were the biggest and the fittest.

At last Herr Hitler arrived in a luxurious motor-car, accompanied by a bodyguard. Those

in the offices looked at him with awe as he passed between them. Looking at him, I wondered where lay his power to attract and control his followers, for he is of quite ordinary appearance. He is of medium height, has an uninteresting but healthy face, and cultivates a small moustache, well shaved away at the sides.

SOON I was shown into the presence of the man who knows better than anyone else how to spread the "Terror" among a population.

"What do you want to see me about? What is your urgent business?" he said abruptly as I entered the office.

"I have come to ask you what are your aims and if you have anything to do with the Fascisti in Italy," I replied.

"I have never met Signor Mussolini nor communicated with him," said Hitler. "Our movement is as old as his, and we have some things in common with the Italians. We have both suffered from the weakness of our Governments. Our problems have increased instead of decreasing, and those to blame are the leaders who do not lead. They are afraid of the people they are supposed to govern, and they have wasted the vitality of the State. They must be destroyed completely. We have no use for weak fools. When the moment arrives we shall be as ruthless in bringing order as the Fascisti were. We have a programme, and we shall give a lead to the country, which is now only drifting to chaos."

HITLER spoke with a terrible fervour, his eyes shining fiercely.

"When are you going to put your plans into execution?" I asked.

"At the first signs of Bolshevism we shall fulfil ourselves. No one will be spared who hesitates to protect our land from the terror of Bolshevism. France is doing her utmost to push Germany into the pit where the Soviet lurks waiting to devour her. France would have our land drained of its vitality so that we could not resist her when she strikes again, which will be soon. She would possess us and dominate Europe. She would have Germany never recover. But we are recovering, and young Germany is conscious of her strength, and will resist all efforts to ruin her. We shall never follow the example of Russia. German blood will flow to the last drop before that can happen."

I GATHERED from half an hour of this sort of thing that the only "enemy" are the working-classes of Bavaria, who are going to resist the lengthening of their working day. Anything which happens to displease Hitler and his supporters will be regarded as Bolshevism, and his hungry hounds will be unleashed to bring "Ordnung," which should mean order but does not, to Germany. Hitler went on to discuss the "ideals" of his followers. Sometimes he used the phrases of the ordinary Socialists, accompanied by the most terrible gestures, clenching his hands savagely and grinding his teeth as if he would bite the working-classes he hates.

He alluded to the "Blutbad" (blood bath), which he considers inevitable before Germany can rise again from her present condition. In one breath he would speak of his country's helplessness, and in the next he would brag of the strength of his organisation. Only a few weeks ago he stated at a secret meeting of the leaders of several *Frei Corps* that he could put an army fully armed in the field at a moment's notice. He applauded the action of Mussolini.

The movement in Italy was inspired by a man's patriotism and sincerity. He saw his country drifting to dissolution, while the Government remained deaf to his warnings. Only by swift action was his country saved from a period like that through which Russia is passing. He succeeded because his motives were unselfish and his appeal kindled the flame of chivalry which had temporarily been extinguished.

THIS movement in Bavaria is just an association of tyrants masquerading as Social Democrats. Hitler is calling to his banner all the unscrupulous creatures of the revolution, together with the unsophisticated students and unemployed ex-officers who have not the enterprise nor inclination to learn a trade or profession.

Intermingled with Hitler's long exposition of his aims, during which he talked tremendously without saying much, he expressed a hatred of the Jews. It seemed as if he wanted me to believe this, and that his Monarchist leanings were vital things to him. As most of the funds come from the "Heavy Industrialists," one can imagine that the twelve-hour day in Germany is the most vital plank in his programme.

I ASKED Hitler what General Ludendorff had to do with the movement. He did not answer, but continued his speech of vague statements, which meant very little. I, however, gathered from one of Hitler's secretaries that although the General is actively assisting the so-called Fascisti, he is still hesitating for fear of helping a party which may get out of hand and carry out some of the ideas expressed in the literature displayed outside the bookshop at Number 12, Cornilousstrasse. He lurks in his villa at Ludwigshöhe, just outside Munich, a figure potent for mischief. He is moved by no fine impulses, as was Mussolini when he gathered around him his small band of patriots to cleanse his country of corruption. Force is the only thing he understands. He believes that nothing can be attained without it.

I BROACHED the subject of the Monarchy to Hitler, who seems to regard its re-establishment not so much as a plan to be carried out, but as something which will follow quite naturally after the next change of Government. A new President will be appointed for a certain time, who will be succeeded by the Crown Prince as President for life, from whom the Crown will pass to his heirs. Hitler refused to answer any vital questions, such, for example, as what his views on reparations were, so I left.